

**Conservation & UWEX
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Conservation & UWEX Education Committee
Land & Water Conservation Department
Planning and Zoning Department

Oneida County Courthouse
P O Box 400
Rhinelander, Wisconsin 54501
Phone (715) 369-7835
Fax (715) 369-6268
www.oneidacountyais.com
www.oclw.org

*Karl Jennrich
Department Head*

*Michele Sadauskas
County Conservationist*

*Stephanie Boismenu
AIS Coordinator*

*Jonna Stephens Jewell
Office Assista*

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TO: ALL LOCAL MEDIA

FROM: Stephanie Boismenu, AIS Coordinator
Oneida County Land & Water Conservation Department

WISCONSIN ANGLERS ARE PULLING THE PLUG ON INVASIVE SPECIES

Most of Oneida County's boaters and anglers are old pros at pulling plants and animals off their boats at the landing to stop the spread of aquatic invasive species. But some invaders like zebra mussel larvae or spiny water fleas are too small to see and can survive to the next lake when water is left in livewells, buckets, bilges, motors or other equipment. This summer, more than ever, boaters must remember to drain all water to prevent microscopic invasive species and disease from moving between lakes and rivers.

As the summer season picks up, invasive species experts like AIS Coordinator Stephanie Boismenu and her AIS Team, will be reminding anglers and boaters that before leaving the boat landings or fishing access sites, they must drain their livewells, bait buckets and all equipment holding water. This year, the statewide Drain Campaign (May 31 – June 2, 2019) will remind water users that Wisconsin's aquatic invasive species law prohibits transporting water between lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands.

Volunteers are sharing this message with a friendly smile and something to help anglers keep their catch fresh on the road home once the water has been drained: ice packs. The requirement to drain water is part of Wisconsin's invasive species law – that live fish can't be transported away from a waterbody. However, once your livewell and buckets holding your catch are drained, the fish are considered dead and can be safely transported home.

Boismenuue advises, “to keep fish fresh on the drive home, anglers can use ice for better tasting fish. Unlike water, ice stops bacterial growth and keeps fish from ingesting toxins that concentrate in fouled, low-oxygen water.”

During the Drain Campaign, the Oneida County AIS Team will be out on the boat landings along with local partners such as the DNR and other resource organizations. Lake groups from Bear Lake, Big bearskin Lake, Crescent, Indian, Horeshead, Lake Julia, Lake George, Mildred, Minocqua, Nokomis, Lake Thompson, Lone Stone, Moen, Pelican, Squash, Swamp, Tom Doyle, Two Sisters, Velvet/Flannery and Manson Lakes, in addition to the Three Lakes Waterfront Association and Tomahawk Lake Association will be participating in this statewide campaign. In addition, watercraft inspectors will be on hand at busy landings throughout the summer to assist boaters in inspecting for hitchhiking invasive species.

It takes only a few minutes at the landing to keep our lakes beautiful and our fish healthy. The following steps are required by law to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.

- INSPECT your boats, trailer, and equipment.
- REMOVE all attached aquatic plants and animals.
- DRAIN all water from boats, vehicles, equipment including livewells and buckets containing fish.
- NEVER MOVE plants or live fish away from a waterbody.
- DISPOSE of unwanted bait in the trash.
- BUY minnows from a Wisconsin bait dealer. Use leftover minnows only under certain conditions* Note: *You may take leftover minnows away from any state water and use them again on that same water. You may use leftover minnows on other waters only if no lake or river water or other fish were added to their container.

For more information, contact Stephanie Boismenuue, Oneida County AIS Coordinator, at sboismenuue@co.oneida.wi.us or at 715-369-7835.

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